ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A multi-layer graphical user interface (GUI) using metadata, provides for timeline metaphoric representations (100A, 100B, 200A, 200B, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900) of pictures in a digital picture database. Icons (104A, 106B, 204A, 208B, 304, 404, 504, 604, 704, 804, 904) representing the points of time by which all of the pictures are categorized are sized according to the relative number of corresponding pictures. The most general view is in the form of a timeline (102A, 102B, 202A, 206B, 302, 402, 502, 602, 702, 802, 902) using either years or decades (when the pictures were taken) as the measuring units. Views linked to the general view further refine the general view with icons (104A, 106B, 204A, 208B, 304, 404, 504, 604, 704, 804, 904) proportionately sized according to the number of pictures corresponding to the categorization represented by the particular icon. The aforementioned further refining views further categorize the pictures according to, for example, month, day of the week, time of day, identified events, and identified people in the pictures.